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Non Commissioned Officers Association of the United States of America

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January 21, 2005

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The Honorable Michael Powell
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

Dear Chairman Powell:

The Non Commissioned Officers Association of the United States of America is strongly opposed to the imposition of any increased fees on telephone calls made with pre-paid Calling Cards. This Association calls upon members of the FCC to defeat any proposed fiscal increase that would raise the cost to utilize existing pre-paid cards. These cards have literally become a significant morale items for military members and their families.

Enlisted members of all Military Departments (Active Duty, Guard and Reserve) and their family members who this Association represents would be significantly impacted by any increase in cost associated with calling cards. Military members in the United States, overseas, or deployed in the Nation's War on Terrorism use these cards routinely to communicate with family members.

Likewise both junior grade enlisted and officer military families use these calling cards in lieu of more expensive cellular phones to communicate with family members separated as the result of school attendance, hospitalization, or distant travel in the Continental United States.

Any increase in cost would negatively impact the value of the card by reducing the number of minutes of calling time available to the holder. It is unconscionable but conceivable to consider that a military member's last telephone call home from somewhere in the War on Terrorism might be cut short because an imposed increase in fees could limit the talk time available on the military members calling card.

Portability of pre-paid cards make them especially attractive for military members and students as demonstrated by their wide acceptance. Up front add on costs will reduce the value of the prepaid card as does additional fees imposed through pay telephone processes that deduct additional "minutes" for the use of a pay telephone. Such add on costs should be capped.

Thank you for your consideration of these thoughts in the decision process of the FCC.

Sincerely,


Richard C. Schneider
Executive Director for Government Affairs

Chartered by the United States Congress